

EXHIBIT 1/
2/7/07
60

From Neil Haight -- AARP

I appear in support of HB 60 on behalf of AARP which has over 150,000 members in Montana. And while Montana's population is projected to increase by 1/3 in the next 23 years, the over-65 population is expected to more than double. These are people with a vast amount of experience that have the greatest ability to use the facilities proposed by HB 60- - -, the greatest ability to access and use our justice system without requiring the services of an attorney to represent them. Because of their unique health, income and social problems, older people may need legal services beyond those that the general population requires.

I have over 38 years experience with Montana Legal Services Association, working with low income legal problems. Over the years two aspects have become indelibly impressed on me. First, there is a glaring need to help those above the poverty standards of those I worked with. Most people can afford to hire a lawyer to prepare a deed or write a letter. Few can afford a court proceeding. Second, most people have a surprising ability to deal with their own legal problems, given a minimum amount of assistance.

My personal opinion is that services offered by HB 60 have by far the greatest potential to provide usable access to our rule of law. HB 60 offers a mix of pro bono publico (free lawyers), and pro se (do it yourself). This mix is needed. I think the biggest showing will be in the do-it-yourself folks.

We ask your support of HB 60 to help all Montanans and especially to give our senior citizens an equal shot at our justice system.